

Lebanon

Preventing Landmine Injuries and Expanding Economic Opportunities for Landmine Survivors and Victims of War in South Lebanon

Implementing Partner: World Rehabilitation Fund, Inc. (WRF)

Funding Period: June 1998 - July 2006 (two-year costed extension in process)

Amount: \$6,174,010

Purpose: Develop practices, policies, attitudes, and capacity to address the socioeconomic problems and social burden resulting from landmines and acts of war. This includes the development and implementation of programs to decrease landmine injuries, assist victims of landmines and war, alleviate social burden, and expand economic opportunities within and around targeted communities.

Accomplishments

- Added more than forty-six new beneficiaries over a period of one year, expanding the number of direct beneficiaries through the life of the project to 170 men and women. Beneficiaries maintained earnings at more than \$200 per month
- Expanded the institutional and economic viability and sustainability of the resource cooperative that was created through the project
- Introduced a new agricultural production and processing line of chicken for broilers
- Introduced a new accounting / financial management system that upgrades governance and ensures transparency and accountability
- Purchased a piece of land and initiated the process of building a community development center to house the resource cooperative and its related functions

The Middle East confrontation and internal civil conflict brought Lebanon to the verge of collapse in the 1980s. The population at large and many communities were burdened by injuries and fatalities due to acts of war and to hundreds of thousands of landmines that were left in many areas throughout the country. Prior to the reoccurrence of conflict in 2006, this environment had stabilized to an extent that enabled the World Rehabilitation Fund (WRF) to embark on a USAID-funded initiative to contribute to revitalizing severely affected communities, focusing primarily on agricultural and economic development.

In 1996, WRF launched a nationwide prosthetics and orthotics program, facilitating greater awareness and understanding of the magnitude of the landmine problem and the related social burden. Findings from this effort set the foundation for a multifaceted nationwide humanitarian

mine action program launched with USAID funding in June 1998. This program is the first of its kind in Lebanon and the region.

Today, with USAID support WRF manages the “Expanding Economic Opportunities for Survivors of Landmines and Victims of War in the District of Jizzine in South Lebanon” program, designed to foster economic inclusion of landmine survivors and war-affected individuals. Through this initiative, landmine survivors engage in income-generating activities such as egg production, beekeeping and honey processing, and other competitive agricultural enterprises. Beneficiaries are involved as stakeholders in a legal resource cooperative that provides employment opportunities and management, marketing, and product processing services.

Eggs, honey, and medicinal herbs, and chicken and their by-products are sold by the resource cooperative or directly by beneficiaries, with significant financial returns sufficient to enhance the lives of their extended families, and the community at large. The program allows for benefit without the need to alter lifestyle or compromise on established social roles and obligations—for example, a widow can be involved without having to leave her home and family.

Four years into its life, the program has been shown to favorably and significantly impact the lives and well-being of hundreds of participants as well as those of families and communities. The program has also enabled better understanding of the challenges facing community-based development projects targeting disadvantaged individuals.